

# LANDOWNER-LESSEE/SPORTSMAN RELATIONS COMMITTEE

## Minutes of Regular Meeting

Tuesday, July 25, 2006

Apache Gold Casino Resort and Convention Center

### Committee Members Present

Sanford Cohen, OHV-Sportsmen Group  
Julie Decker, Bureau of Land Management  
Stephen Williams, Arizona State Land Department  
Darcy Ely, Livestock Grower  
Dennis Moroney, Livestock Grower  
Joe Melton, Arizona Game and Fish Commission  
James O'Haco, Livestock Grower  
David Hoyle, Sportsmen Group

### Committee Members Absent

Jon Fugate, Sportsmen Group  
Joe Underwood, Sportsmen Group  
David Hoyle, Sportsmen Group  
Tami Emmett, Coronado National Forest  
Scott Heap, Sportsmen Group  
Richard Rico, Special Services Assistant Director, AGFD

### Others Present

Joe King, Livestock Grower  
Jesse Davis, Livestock Grower  
Newell Dryden, Livestock Grower  
Mark Weise, Development Branch Chief, AGFD  
Troy Christensen, Landowner Relations Program, AGFD  
Al Eiden, Landowner Relations Program, AGFD  
Grant Beauprez, Landowner Relations Program, AGFD  
Pat Barber, AGFD

### Meeting Notes

The Landowner-Lessee/ Sportsman Relations Committee (Committee) meeting was called to order at 3:34 p.m. Chairman Sanford Cohen initiated an introduction of those present.

### Approval of Meeting Minutes

The Committee accepted the meeting minutes for January 21, 2006.

### Commissioner's Comments

This meeting was held in conjunction with the Arizona Cattle Growers Association Convention; a few ranchers took time out from various policy meetings and events to sit in on this meeting. Commissioner Joe Melton welcomed all in attendance and then allowed the meeting to proceed.

### Updates from Land Management Agencies

Julie Decker gave an update from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). She informed the Committee that the BLM had a site visit scheduled for the next day regarding access at the east

entrance to the Aravaipa Wilderness. The BLM continues to work on several management plans and is seeking public comment. Commissioner Melton asked about the costs involved in the planning process. Ms. Decker replied that the entire planning process was quite expensive. However, E-Planning, a new interactive tool on the Internet, will reduce costs.

Stephen Williams gave an update from the Arizona State Land Department (ASLD). He gave information regarding sale of State Trust lands near the Desert Wells Multi-Use Area. Mr. Williams told of a recent meeting with Landowner Relations Program (LRP) Manager, Sal Palazzolo, regarding a right-of-way for permanent easement in Yavapai County.

Tami Emmett from the USFS had been called to work a forest fire in California the day before the meeting; she sent her apologies for being unable to attend or find a replacement.

### **Updates/Current Issues**

LRP Manager Sal Palazzolo was at a meeting with the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, so Mark Weise gave the updates. He began with some committee member business. A plaque was presented to Dennis Moroney who is filling one of the five Committee member positions, which represent livestock growers. John King resigned because he moved to New Mexico; he submitted his brother, Joe King, as a possible replacement. Joe King was present at the meeting and he gave the Committee some information on his qualifications. The Committee voted to recommend that the Commission appoint Mr. King to the vacant position.

Commissioner Melton commented that he and other members of the Commission attended the last Arizona Hunters Who Care cleanup project at the King's Anvil Ranch and saw the seriousness of issues related to Undocumented Aliens. Commissioner Melton elaborated on how impressive it is that ranchers manage to survive under those conditions.

Hubby Grounds is no longer in the cattle business and felt that he should also resign. Committee members should solicit for possible candidates to fill that position.

Mark Weise informed the Committee of the completion of the purchase of a right-of-way from the ASLD, which will provide perpetual access for the western end of the Charouleau Gap Trail into the Coronado National Forest. Another perpetual right-of-way across private property to gain access to Peck Canyon, near Nogales, is nearly complete. The Department sent letters to both Arizona Senators, asking support for the "Open Fields" legislation - this program will provide funding to state agencies to work with private landowners to open up public access. The LRP is currently working on an access agreement with Yavapai Ranch in Region III; this is a short-term access agreement, however, it is an extremely important hunting area.

Mark Weise told the Committee that Floyd White continues to work on ranches across the state, performing road maintenance. He will probably spend most of the summer months in Regions II and III. Jim O'Haco asked about the possibility of increasing the size of the road maintenance program with a second grader and operator. Mr. Weise said that he would like to increase the scope of this successful program, but there currently is inadequate funding. He added that the LRP is currently recruiting for a Natural Resources Conservation Service Technical Service Provider position, which will be based in Prescott.

Grant Beauprez talked about several Landowner Incentive Program agreements that have been signed with landowners across the state. These projects, once completed, will total over 10,000

acres of habitat/grassland improvements. Several more are in the works for this summer. The Committee discussed how volunteers might be able to help with the projects.

LRP has completed 7 additional short-term access agreements with landowners, since the January meeting. Two of interest, are with the Hopi tribe regarding the Hopi 3 Canyon Ranches. An agreement with the Navajo tribe regarding the Boquillas Ranch is in the works; the Department is cautiously optimistic that the tribe will sign it this time.

Through Senate Bill 1441, the Department received \$3.5 million, which is designated for five specific water and habitat improvement projects across the state. Efforts will be made to find matching funds in order to maximize the benefit to wildlife and ranchers.

### **Identification of Current Issues and Possible Solutions**

Sanford Cohen informed the Committee that the bill for the "Copper Sticker Program", which would have created a funding mechanism for off-highway vehicle (OHV) management, died at the Legislature. An effort will be made to introduce the "Copper Sticker Program" during the upcoming legislative session; however, it may be more likely that the Legislature simply approve a 2-year appropriation for OHV management. Mr. Cohen also informed the Committee of meetings for two efforts, which sometimes get confused - the Governor's inventory of road less areas and the National Off Highway Vehicle Coalition-sponsored travel management rule. Mr. Cohen also told the Committee that Arizona State Parks is currently looking for OHV projects to fund with a half million dollars of Federal grant funds.

Dennis Moroney brought up an issue of inaccurate advertising by real estate companies regarding recreation on State Trust lands adjacent to properties they are trying to sell. Stephen Williams said that ASLD has already successfully addressed the problem with the Arizona Department of Real Estate and also some individual realtors. Commissioner Melton commented on the importance of programs to help ranchers survive instead of selling land for subdivisions. When lands are subdivided, it would prevent problems if public access rights-of-ways were written into the land sale agreements.

There was discussion regarding congressional proposals to designate Fossil Creek as a Wild and Scenic River. Once he reviews a copy of the bill and map, Sanford Cohen will draft a letter to send to Senator McCain and Congressman Renza saying that the Committee is opposed to the designation of Fossil Creek as a Wild and Scenic River unless the plan allows for Fossil Creek Road to remain open.

Jesse Davis, a rancher from southern Arizona, offered a suggestion that the Department send successfully drawn hunters maps that designate land ownership for that unit to help avoid access issues. Mark Weise explained that this idea was not feasible. However, technology will eventually allow for printable maps to be placed on the website. The Tucson Regional Office currently allows hunters to stop by and print maps. LRP personnel addressed Mr. Davis's specific concerns for his ranch.

### **Next Meeting**

The Committee decided that the next meeting should be scheduled in conjunction with the January 20, 2007 "Meet the Commission" event. Troy Christensen informed the Committee that the Commission event would be held at the Glendale Civic Center and that an effort would be made to

schedule the LLSRC meeting at that location. Committee members will be informed of the date and time of that meeting once it has been determined.

**Action Items:**

1. Present to the Commission the recommendations of Joe King and Duane Coleman to serve on the Committee. (LRP Staff)
2. Prepare the Committee's recommendation of Jack Tellas for the Habitat Steward of the Year Award and deliver it to Director's Office. (LRP Staff)
3. Meeting minutes distributed. (LRP Staff)
4. Review copy of a bill and, if need be, send a letter to Senator McCain and Congressman Renza saying that the Committee is opposed to the designation of Fossil Creek as a Wild and Scenic River unless the plan allows for Fossil Creek Road to remain open. (Chairman Sanford Cohen)

End of Document